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of marriageable age marries a younger brother of her dead husband. Even if she does not do so, she stays in her husband's *okka* looking after the children. She goes out of her conjugal *okka* only if she marries a member of a different *okka*.

All the members of an *okka* are descended from a common ancestor. The spirits of the dead ancestors (*kāraṇavas*) are regarded with great reverence and propitiated periodically. It is believed that they continue to take an interest in the affairs of the *okka*. They expect the surviving members to look after the property and interests of the *okka*, to observe the rules of the moral code, and to show piety towards the various deities and themselves. They have the power to reward those who are pious and to punish with disease and misfortune those who are impious.

The eldest male member of the most senior agnatic branch is the head (*koruvukāra* or *paṭṭédāra*) of the *okka* whose properties he looks after and whose affairs he administers. The younger male members are called *kikkararu* and they have to obey the head in all matters concerning the *okka* as a whole. The head of the *okka* is usually also the eldest male member of it, and this union of headship and seniority in the same person results in his enjoying a great amount of power in domestic matters. Personal qualities such as hard work, sobriety, chastity, piety towards manes and gods, unselfishness and impartiality increase the headman's powers.

The headman's powers are balanced by his duties: he has to see that the expenses of the household are met, the members of the *okka* do not quarrel with each other, the ancestral lands are properly cultivated, and so on. He has always to weigh in his own mind how every act of his is regarded by the adult men in the *okka*. It is not known whether formerly every *okka* had a council composed of the adult men in it, but it is known definitely that when a headman proved himself very incompetent all the adult men in the *okka* met together and proceeded to elect a new headman. In the last seventy years the Karavanḍa *okka* twice elected new headmen to replace the existing ones. The right to replace an old but incompetent headman with a young and competent man is sanctioned by the Coorg saw (*paḷanjol* = old saying), '*ariyuvavanē periyavan*', which means 'the wisest is the eldest'. We call attention here to the equation of wisdom with seniority, an equation which is used even in replacing an old man by a young one.

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764 272 On the day after the cremation of a corpse, the dead man's son goes to the burial-ground, and on the spot where the dead man was buried he pours successively a vessel of water and a vessel of milk.

Milk is a very valued commodity, and the ritual giving of milk [431] indicates that solidarity is, or ought to be, prevalent between the giver and the recipient. It is also a symbol of pleasure, luxury, and [828] happiness, and consequently mourners abstain from it while they [765] offer it to the spirit of the departed person. The mourners also abstain from other valued objects like curd, honey, mushrooms, meat, and betel leaves and areca-nut, which are again offered to the dead person's spirit.

A kinsman who drank milk during the mourning-period would be guilty of impiety towards the dead person. In the neighbouring Kannaḍa country it is considered a very bitter abuse to tell a person, 'I will drink milk when you die.'

[302] The use of milk is extended from solidarity rites to other rites which have either no reference to solidarity at all or at best only a very indirect one. While ordinarily water is used in shaving a man, milk is used while shaving a bridegroom. The dish containing the milk and the shavings is later emptied at the foot of a milk-exuding [844] tree like the jack tree (*artocarpus integrifolia*). The placenta is similarly buried at the foot of a milk-exuding tree. One of the five pillars of a marriage *pandal* has to be a branch of a milk-exuding tree. After a corpse has been cremated the bones are consigned either to a river or buried at the foot of a milk-exuding tree. At [765] mourning, leaf-cups made from the leaves of the jack tree are used to offer food to the spirit of the departed person.

XII

585 431 Everyone who performs *mūrta* to the subject should give a money-gift, and the three married women are expected to give a gold coin (*pombaṇa*) each. At a wedding the mother of the bride (or groom), and the groom while performing *mūrta* to the bride, have to give a purse containing several coins, one of which should be a gold coin.

A money-gift has to be given not only at *mangala* but on other occasions as well: relatives who come to pay their last respects to the dead man perform a series of solidarity rites at the end of which they give a money-gift. Again, an infant has to be given a money-